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ABSTRACT

Workshops that help students develop leadership are offered twice a year by the Office of Student Activities at the University of Pittsburgh. Soon after the 12 programming committee chairs and the student coordinator are selected in December, they meet with advisory staff in a local hotel for a training workshop, the first session of the "LeaderShop." A retraining workshop the following September is also offered as a refresher course. The LeaderShop uses a variety of learning/training strategies, including questionnaires, case studies, lectures, group discussion, and simulation. The student activities office helps promote student development by covering such areas as leadership and communication, time and conflict management, problem-solving and decision-making, planning and organizing, and budgeting and evaluating. In fact, the committee chairpersons not only schedule, contract, and manage events, they also assume responsibility for their committee activities. As a group, they conduct their own meetings, resolve budget disputes, preside over committees, and monitor progress of their scheduled events. Involvement of students in the leadership sessions promotes self-expression, commitment, and accountability, and enables them to meet interesting people and expand cultural awareness and participation. (SW)

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Learning LeaderShop develops students, builds group unity

Darla Twale and Rick Fogle

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Twice a year the Pitt Program Council (PPC) leaves campus for the Learning LeaderShop, a two-part leadership workshop conducted by the Office of Student Activities. There the programming committee chairs gain self-confidence, build group unity, and acquire the skills they will need to produce programs for University of Pittsburgh students.

Soon after the 12 programming committee chairs and student coordinator are selected in December, they meet with the advisory staff in a local hotel for a Training Workshop, the first session of the LeaderShop.

Training Workshop

Icebreaker exercises help students associate names and committees with faces and personalities. Staff members then explain the practical aspects of the program planning process, and students complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, 1977) and the Pitt Program Council New Chairperson Assessment Instrument. Results of the Myers-Briggs and the PPC Assessment are used in planning future workshops.

Following lunch, the staff discusses the philosophy and purpose of the Program Council with the aid of organizational charts and the Council's Constitution (1983). Participants receive articles on telephone negotiation, contracting, and committee recruitment and retention. The office secretary shows the students how to complete the university forms and outlines the procedures necessary for effective programming. After a question-and-answer session, chairpersons brainstorm program ideas and explore cosponsorships and thematic possibilities.

In the Saturday session, the workshop coordinators use personal and group development exercises to encourage self-confidence in programming decisions and introduce the Learning LeaderShop resource manual. Tempered with sociological and psychological perspectives, the 90-page manual includes personal inventories, tests, questionnaires, and an overview of student development theory. Facilitators then cover their areas of expertise using a blend of personal experience, practical application, graphic presentation, theory, humor, and student participation. The student chairs then list and date their goals and expectations for the upcoming year in their programming areas.

After lunch, chairpersons meet with their Pitt Program Council predecessors in a fish-bowl exercise and share fears and experiences. Guest speakers address the importance of extracurricular involvement for career preparation, black student programming needs, and the role of the campus news and publications office. Each day concludes with dinner and group recreational activities.

The Sunday morning session covers Maslow's hierarchy of needs, situational leadership, managerial styles, time management, procrastination, conflict resolution, role playing, and problem solving. A summation period includes another question-and-answer session, a discussion of the upcoming National Association for Campus Activities convention, and a sharing of their impressions of the weekend experience.

Retraining Workshop

After just two months of activities programming and budgeting experience, the student chairs depart for summer vacation. Therefore, a Retraining Workshop in September serves as their refresher course. On the first Saturday after the start of the fall term, the 13 students assemble at another off-campus location to review budgeting procedures, form completion, programming, and group processes.

Upon arriving at this mini-LeaderShop, the group engages in an icebreaker exercise to reacquaint members. Afterward, they complete two scales to evaluate and improve their communication skills. Next, the group examines and discusses several sociological and psychological aspects of the Pitt Program Council, explaining its environment, processes, role, and status.

Following lunch, the staff conducts a brainstorming exercise that assesses the needs, concerns, and possible programs for non-traditional students at a large urban university. Handouts detail sample agenda preparation, goal setting, leadership styles, characteristics of effective organizations and organization members, and roles for group members.

As in the initial weekend, we use the case study method to facilitate group techniques of collaboration and consensus as well as to develop problem-solving and decision-making strategies. The participants are divided into three groups, and each group is assigned a legal, social, or personal crisis that could arise in the Pitt Program Council office. After each group shares its thoughts on how to handle the crisis, chairpersons play the role of adviser, solve the hypothetical dilemma, decide on a course of action, and evaluate its possible consequences.

Using a simulation format with a Murder Mystery Weekend theme, the chairs acting in concert are assigned responsibility for a procedural aspect of the exercise. Assigned tasks related to their individual programming areas, students are involved in making travel and accommodation arrangements, scheduling a pretrip party with food service, booking Saturday evening's entertainment, ordering a classic mystery movie, planning a costume video dance, and developing a publicity campaign. Students then receive a mock budget, the necessary university forms to complete, and deadlines to meet. After chairpersons consult with their colleagues and advisers, the entire group discusses the procedures needed to ensure a successful program. Using this realistic approach, students not only grasp the basic programming processes but also develop a viable multi-committee sponsored activity.

Students are asked to complete the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Resolution Mode Instrument (Betters, 1983) in their spare time as a method of learning their particular style of conflict resolution. Finally, we explain the University's cocurricular transcript. In addition to listing specific college activities in which they participate, this transcript can facilitate the students' assessment and evaluation of their growth through cocurricular involvement (*Campus Activities and Programs*, 1983; *The Student Development Transcript*, 1980).

The Learning LeaderShop concept is maintained throughout the year as chairpersons receive information and guidance on negotiation and budgeting, and share their committee problems with each other during weekly Executive Board meetings. These meetings combined with their weekly advisory sessions allow the staff to monitor closely each chairperson's development.

Discussion

The Pitt Program Council uses these workshops to further the personal and intellectual development of students. The Council's advisers feel these seminars should deepen the chairs' sense of confidence and competence; establish them as an identifiable campus group; teach them ways to creatively channel energy, frustration, and emotion; augment the theoretical aspects of their classroom education; and intensify their sense of responsibility, dependability, and dedication. To maximize the developmental impact of the LeaderShop, advisers match abilities and expectations with chairpersons' strengths and weaknesses, thereby compelling the staff to revise the LeaderShop agenda each year.

These dual training workshops produce a greater sense of group cohesiveness and rapport than in the previous year when only one workshop was scheduled. Moving the sessions off-campus facilitates the development of professional and social relationships and prepares stu-

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dents for their trip to the NACA convention and for their fall return to campus programming.

In addition, chairpersons not only receive an expanded training manual and several supplemental handouts, they are guided by a more experienced staff. The rationale and chronology of each agenda combines structured workshops with free time for group recreation. Despite an increased amount of material, students have ample opportunity to assimilate information. Presenting the mechanical aspects of programming in the January session allows chairs to relax and apply new information to subsequent theoretical and conceptual presentations.

Thoroughness, variety, and the interrelation of information are achieved at both sessions. The use of scales and questionnaires, lecturettes, case studies, group discussion, question-and-answer periods, brainstorming, and simulation make the LeaderShop both interesting and productive. By covering such areas as leadership and communication skills; time and conflict management; problem solving and decision making; and planning, organizing, budgeting, and evaluating, the staff lay the foundation for student development to occur throughout the school term.

Conclusion

Workshop facilitators continually stress that student development is an ongoing process. Through a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic cocurricular experiences, students can broaden their horizons, meet interesting people, expand cultural awareness and participation, and reach a satisfying level of personal achievement.

Pitt Program Council chairs have a background of high school or civic leadership experience, and many hold other responsible positions on campus or at work. What many absorb during these training workshops can apply to their tasks at hand as well as to their lives beyond Pitt Program Council. For instance, chairpersons' participation, self-expression, accountability, and commitment form the basis not only of a successful workshop, but also of a contributing member of society.

Furthermore, chairpersons not only schedule, contract, and manage events, they also assume all responsibility for their committee activities. As a group, they conduct their own meetings, resolve budget disputes, preside over their committees, and monitor the progress of their scheduled events. Planning programs and meeting deadlines encourage them to be better time managers. In the process, they establish friendships and an esprit de corps, and eventually they feel a more integral part of the campus subculture.

Despite an increased stress level, chairpersons view the experience as a boost to their self-image and self-esteem. Based on the reports of past chairs, involvement as a Pitt Program Council chair significantly increases skill mastery (i.e., problem-solving, delegation, judgment, administrative ability) and personal contacts, thereby expanding their chances for future employment. Finally, as assertive individuals, they perfect their decision-making strategies (Twale, 1985).

Because Program Council chairs are exposed to such a plethora of personal, social, and managerial information, they have decided to share their knowledge by scheduling their own Saturday mini-workshops for interested committee members. The Pitt Program Council Student Development Series covers the areas of motivation, creative promotion, small group communication, and assertiveness. This avenue for old and new committee members to share their knowledge and wisdom creates a firm foundation upon which to retain members as well as to train the next generation of Pitt Program Council chairs.

Most importantly, the balance of formal and informal learning, cohesiveness, and camaraderie realistically mirrors the advisers' personalities and the office atmosphere, thereby easing the fears and concerns of the student chairs. Equipped with their training manual, committee, ideas, enthusiasm, and conscientious advisers, all chairpersons expect to learn, to continue to grow, and to subsequently aid in the development of others.

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